

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

*Subj*  
~~Claim 1.~~ (Currently amended) An alert control method in telephone equipment having an alert function, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

- a) storing time data related to a name of a person to communicate with in a phonebook database;
- b) determining based on the time data whether a predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person; and
- c) alerting when it is determined that the predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person.

Claim 2. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 1, wherein the time data comprises is a last-communication time of day at which communication with the person was made last.

Claim 3. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 2, wherein the determining step (b) comprises ~~the steps of~~:

- b.1) reading a current time of day from a timer;
- b.2) calculating an elapsed time from the last-communication time of day to the current time of day; and
- b.3) determining whether the elapsed time exceeds the predetermined time interval.

Claim 4. (Original) The alert control method according to claim 2, wherein the last-communication time of day is initially set to a time of day when data related to the

person is registered into the phonebook database.

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*XX*

Claim 5. (Original) The alert control method according to claim 2, wherein the last-communication time of day is updated each time communication with the person is terminated.

Claim 6. (Original) The alert control method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined time interval is arbitrarily determined depending on a user's instruction.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 1, wherein the alerting ~~of the step (c)~~ is performed by driving at least one of a speaker, a vibrator, and a display.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) An alert control method in telephone equipment having an alert function, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

- a) storing a last-communication time of day related to a name of each of a plurality of persons to communicate with in a phonebook database;
- b) dividing the plurality of persons into a plurality of groups;
- c) determining a before-alert time interval for each of the groups, wherein the before-alert time interval is a time interval during which communication with the person is not made before alerting;
- d) determining whether the before-alert time interval has elapsed after the last-communication time of day; and

*e)* alerting when it is determined that the before-alert time interval has elapsed after the last-communication time of day.

*Claim 9.* (Original) The alert control method according to claim 8, wherein the last-communication time of day is initially set to a time of day when data related to the person is registered into the phonebook database.

*Claim 10.* (Original) The alert control method according to claim 8, wherein the last-communication time of day is updated each time communication with the person is terminated.

*Claim 11.* (Currently amended) An alert control method in telephone equipment having an alert function, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

- a)* a storing time data related to a name of a person to communicate with in a phonebook database;
- b)* storing an alert-inhibition time period during which alert is inhibited;
- c)* determining based on the time data whether a predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person;
- d)* alerting when a current time of day falls out of the alert-inhibition time period and it is determined that the predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person; and
- e)* inhibiting alert when the current time of day falls into the alert-inhibition time period even if it is determined that the predetermined time interval has elapsed without

communicating with the person.

Claim 12. (Original) The alert control method according to claim 11, wherein the time data is a last-communicating time of day at which communication with the person was made last.

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~~Claim 13.~~ (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 11, wherein the alerting ~~of the step (d)~~ is performed by driving at least one of a speaker, a vibrator, and a display.

Claim 14. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 13, wherein inhibiting comprises ~~in the step (c)~~; an audible alert by the speaker and/or the vibrator is inhibited and a silent alert on the display is permitted.

Claim 15. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 1, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

~~d)~~ storing an alert list containing persons targeted for alert; and  
~~e)~~ displaying the alert list in form of a menu on a display so that a desired one is selected from the alert list to make a call to the desired one.

Claim 16. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 8, further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

~~f)~~ storing an alert list containing persons targeted for alert; and

~~g) displaying the alert list in form of a menu on a display so that a desired one is selected from the alert list to make a call to the desired one.~~

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~~Claim 17. (Currently amended) The alert control method according to claim 11, further comprising the steps of:~~

~~f) storing an alert list containing persons targeted for alert;~~  
~~g) displaying the alert list in form of a menu on a display so that a desired one is selected from the alert list to make a call to the desired one.~~

~~Claim 18. (Currently amended) A telephone apparatus having an alert function, comprising:~~

~~a phonebook database for storing time data related to a name of a person to communicate with; and~~  
~~a controller for determining based on the time data whether a predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person and starting the alert function when it is determined that the predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person.~~

~~Claim 19. (Currently amended) A telephone apparatus having an alert function, comprising:~~

~~a phonebook database for storing a last-communication time of day related to a name of each of a plurality of persons to communicate with, wherein the plurality of persons is divided into a plurality of groups; and~~

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a controller for determining a before-alert time interval for each of the groups, wherein the before-alert time interval is a time interval during which communication with the person is not made before alerting, determining whether the before-alert time interval has elapsed after the last-communication time of day, and starting the alert function when it is determined that the before-alert time interval has elapsed after the last-communication time of day.

Claim 20. (Currently amended) A telephone apparatus having an alert function, comprising:

a phonebook database for storing time data related to a name of a person to communicate with; an alert-inhibition timetable storing an alert-inhibition time period during which alert is inhibited; and

a controller for determining based on the time data whether a predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person, starting the alert function when a current time of day falls out of the alert-inhibition time period and it is determined that the predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person, and inhibiting alert when the current time of day falls into the alert-inhibition time period even if it is determined that the predetermined time interval has elapsed without communicating with the person.

Claim 21. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the storing time data is in response to termination of a call to the person.

Claim 22. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein the storing of a last-communication time of day is in response to termination of a call to the person.

Claim 23. (New) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the phonebook database stores the time data in response to termination of a call to the person.

Claim 24. (New) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the phonebook database stores the time data in response to termination of a call to the person.